Creative Commons 2015-2020 Organizational Strategy
APPROVED BY CC BOARD OCT 16, 2015

= Introduction =
The Creative Commons 2015-2020 Organizational Strategy reflects over a year of intensive consultation, discussion, brainstorming, analysis, and testing throughout CC's global community, including staff, board, affiliates, partners, supporters, and donors. The insights and approaches contained have been influenced by hundreds of valuable discussions with creators, non-profits, foundations, government officials, advocacy organizations, content platforms, lawyers, librarians, museums, archivists, industry advocates, and open community leaders.

These essential discussions have taken place on mailing lists, in chat rooms, in boardrooms and coffee shops, in large groups and in one-on-one discussions. Prompted and unprompted, time and time again, the need for a more vibrant, usable, collaborative commons has been an issue of concern. This is a critical moment for the commons, for the open Web, and for Creative Commons. I am incredibly enthusiastic about this new direction for the organization, and we are all deeply motivated to bring it to life. I'm grateful to everyone who has given their time and energy to help shape this strategy.

Ryan Merkley
CEO, Creative Commons

= Rationale =

= We need to talk about sharing =
Collaboration, sharing, and co-operation are in our nature — building community, co-operating towards common goods, and creating shared benefits are at the heart of who we are. In fact, these values live even closer to us than our beating hearts, operating at the level of our DNA. Martin Nowak, a Harvard professor who studies the underpinnings of evolution, argued in Scientific American that humanity's story is one of both competition and cooperation. According to Nowak, it is not just a struggle for survival, but also an essential "snuggle for survival."

An extreme take on Darwin's theory of evolution might suggest we should never help our fellow humans. We are expected to exploit our creative works to the greatest extent possible, to extract the maximum benefit, to the exclusion of all others. To accept anything less is foolish. And yet the leading thinkers, and the data, suggest the exact opposite.

Nowak's research shows that co-operators — even those who share at their own expense — often win out over time. Elinor Ostrom's research on the power of shared economies and the collaborative management of common resources won her the Nobel Prize in Economics. In Adam Grant's book, "Give and Take", he goes beyond the idea that givers are purely altruistic, and argues that those who "give first are often best positioned for success later." And giving doesn't just help the giver, it also begets more giving. According to Grant, when researchers studied giving across social networks, they found that when one person gave at their own

personal cost over a series of rounds, others were more likely to contribute in subsequent rounds, even with people who were not in the original group. “The presence of a single giver was enough to establish a norm of giving,” wrote Grant.

Sharing is not a purely selfless act — while thinking beyond one’s own personal benefit is at the core of why we share, it also pays itself forward in reputation, and rewards us with good feelings and personal gratification. Sharing contributes to our individual identity — how we want to see ourselves, and be seen, in the world. Nowak calls this kind of earned reputation “indirect reciprocity” — common in large, complex communities, where direct reciprocity is nearly impossible. Complex cmmunities like the ones we created together with the Web. Individuals who share in these communities establish and accumulate reputation. To be known, and to be valued — that’s reputation — and it is essential to vibrant, open communities, from Wikipedia, to open science, to open source software. We accumulate benefits from others who give freely because of the norms created in those groups. These acts are not entirely altruistic, and the motivations behind them are real and powerful.

This is the real power of sharing: concurrent and lasting benefits, multiplied for the giver, the receiver, and society. If Grant’s research is right, then a global movement built around sharing and collaboration will be infectious — converting not only those who give and receive, but establishing and reinforcing new norms in online communities. Every share can inspire others — eventually, over the long run — to “share alike”.

The line between these online communities and real life is blurring, or in many cases, altogether irrelevant. The Internet is real life. It’s where we go to work. It’s how we connect to the people we love. It’s where we tell our stories. This is the society we’re building together. If it is going to be fair, equal, diverse, vibrant, serendipitous, and safe for everyone, it will only be because we choose to make it that way. If it is going to be accessible, equitable, and full of innovation and opportunity, it will require our leadership to build the foundations that support these ideals.

This is how Creative Commons can be successful: by ensuring that the legal, technical, and policy infrastructure we create is designed to foster cooperation and sharing. The tools and services we create are important, but equally or perhaps even more important is how we create them: by supporting and fostering open, collaborative communities and driving engagement across the spectrum of open knowledge and free culture. Our open values are at the heart of what we do, but also how we do it. If we are successful in this endeavour, we will be much closer to realizing our vision: unlocking the full potential of the Internet to drive a new era of development, growth, and productivity.

= Towards a vibrant, usable commons =

While we may all be hard-wired for sharing, legislators in every country in the world have taken copyright well beyond its original role as “an incentive for creation” to a carefully-guarded and nearly never-ending right to private profit.

Copyright was originally designed to inspire more creativity from creators — to guarantee them some limited benefit to incentivize their creation. Today’s copyright practically ignores the fact that the Web and technological innovation made us all creators and publishers, often dozens of times a day. This modern reality has implications for creativity, innovation, privacy, business

models, and more, yet most of these issues remain unaddressed in antiquated copyright structures. As a result of its refusal to acknowledge the present, today's copyright rules restrict sharing, slow and prevent collaboration, and leave millions of works locked away regardless of the author's desire (or lack of desire) to use them.

As a society, we are failing to limit the past — this was Lawrence Lessig's warning and refrain from "Free Culture." In fact, we have capitulated to the past, protecting traditional structures and business models, often at the expense of innovation and creativity. We put private good before cooperation. We will never know exactly what we've lost as a result. It's impossible to quantify fully the inventions not made, discoveries not revealed, and creativity restrained.

The benefits that should be afforded to the public as part of an effective system of copyright are sadly lacking today, and it's reasonable to expect that without a dramatic shift we may never realize these benefits. Secret deals, negotiated by governments and corporations hand-in-hand, without public review or consideration, are the new normal. Most copyright negotiations and consultations are focused on making minor changes, rather than addressing the major failures of laws that were written for another century. The fight for copyright reform can't be won without rethinking our approach, and harnessing the power of many interconnected global communities.

Creative Commons didn't change copyright. The terms of copyright are still so long that a new work published today will be locked down until long after we are all dead. But a Creative Commons license offers an elegant solution for someone who wants to share right now. The licenses are not, and never will be, an alternative to meaningful copyright reform, but they are a powerful tool that creators can employ now without waiting, and without asking permission. CC created a release valve to the constraints of copyright — a doorway to an alternate reality of free and open content, powered by creators who share a set of important values. And while CC has been successful, our work will not be complete until we light up that universe of content and creators to establish what we might describe as an open distributed social network.

CC is now well into our second decade, and the suite of licenses have become the global standard for legal/permissive sharing — they are embedded in major content platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, and Medium, public archives like the DPLA, Internet Archive, and Wikimedia Commons, and have been adopted by governments and foundations, including the White House and major US foundations including Hewlett, Gates, and Ford. The CC licenses enable open access to academic research and data, open textbooks, and are increasingly used for government open data (via CC0). The license suite functions globally, and is brought to life around the world by CC affiliate chapters in 85 countries.

Creative Commons represents just one part of the global commons. Today's commons: one with the potential for infinite abundance rather than the tragedy of mismanaged scarcity, is made up of many overlapping communities: open source, open government data, open science, open educational resources (OER), Wikipedians, Mozillians, free software creators, etc. While we don't agree on everything, our common thread is a desire to foster the benefits of openness: access, opportunity, equity, innovation, transparency.

Taken together, the commons is a platform for cooperation. Each person joins the network when they share, which invites a collaboration with others — sometimes direct, and often indirect. Today, there are over 1.1 billion Creative Commons licensed works, shared by millions of people

around the world. What's most powerful about this number is that each creator chose to cooperate, to collaborate, and to share. Despite this profound gift, their works too often sit disconnected from each other, without context, gratitude, or mechanisms for collaboration.

= A renewed focus for Creative Commons =

CC's focus should no longer be to achieve scale. The CC licenses are ubiquitous, and accepted as the global standard for sharing of content under permissive legal terms. The commons is massive and growing. CC's tools are embedded in the largest content platforms in the world, and new ones are added each year. In 2015, the educational platform edX, and the blogging platform Medium each added CC license tools to their platforms, and Flickr added CC0 and the public domain mark (PDM). The CC logo and icons are known globally, and are now part of the permanent collection at the NY Museum of Modern Art, alongside the @ symbol and the recycling logo. The 2015 State of the Commons report showed that between 2010 and 2015, the commons nearly tripled in size.

The key challenge facing the commons today is usability, vibrancy, and collaboration. CC has helped to foster a global movement that has reimagined the idea of the commons as a digital environment of infinite abundance inspired by collaboration, rather than mismanaged scarcity plagued by self-interest. The size of the commons is not as important as how (and if) the works it contains are used to achieve our vision and mission. This is most likely to come to fruition if the materials contained within the commons are easy to discover and curate, to use and remix, and if those who create feel valued for their contributions. To date, this has not been the case. In every part of the commons, users struggle to realize these benefits. The opportunity for CC is to focus and do more to offer tools, education, advocacy, and community-building.

The Web has obviously changed significantly since 2002 when CC launched, but the way the CC licenses work hasn't. While most web services and apps are data-driven and accessible via API, CC's licenses are largely static, devoid of data, and rooted in markup. There are no services to enhance the user experience, or provide additional value and create connections. Users still have to manually provide attribution. There are no analytics about use or re-mix. Adding a work to the commons is a huge gift, but contributors get very little in exchange — no feedback, no analytics, not even a "like" or a "thank you." While CC is integral to many kinds of creativity and sharing on the web, it has yet to capitalize on this influence to connect and light up the commons.

CC must recognize its various roles in a variety of diverse and active communities. We provide essential infrastructure for the Web, and are vital contributors and leaders in these global movements. The opportunity to realize the benefits of openness will come from showing how "open" is uniquely able to solve the challenges of our time. Our role is not just as providers of tools, but also as strategic partners, advocates, influencers, and supporters to quantify, evangelize, and demonstrate the benefits of open.

The following strategic direction and actions flow directly from these insights, and will force us to make choices and prioritize our efforts. We also recognize that Creative Commons is both an organization and a movement, and that there will be many actors — especially CC's global affiliate network — who will take on their own projects and initiatives that extend the scope of these activities. That is not only acceptable, it must be encouraged and supported to the greatest

extent possible. A powerful movement is one of common values with many independent actors seeking a shared outcome, not uniform application of programs and tools. If we are successful, our initiatives will support these communities in various ways as we all seek to strengthen the commons.

= Strategy and Logic Model =

Logic Model — what we do and how
The logically related parts of a program, showing the links between program objectives, program activities (efforts applied coherently and reliably over a sustained time), and expected program outcomes. A logic model makes clear who will be served, what should be accomplished, and specifically how it will be done (i.e., written cause-and-effect statements for a given program design). Put simply: inputs > activities > outputs > intermediate outcomes > ultimate outcomes

Intended outcome statement
The intended outcome statement describes and defines success for an organization: What is the outcome that we will hold ourselves accountable for achieving, in what timeframe?

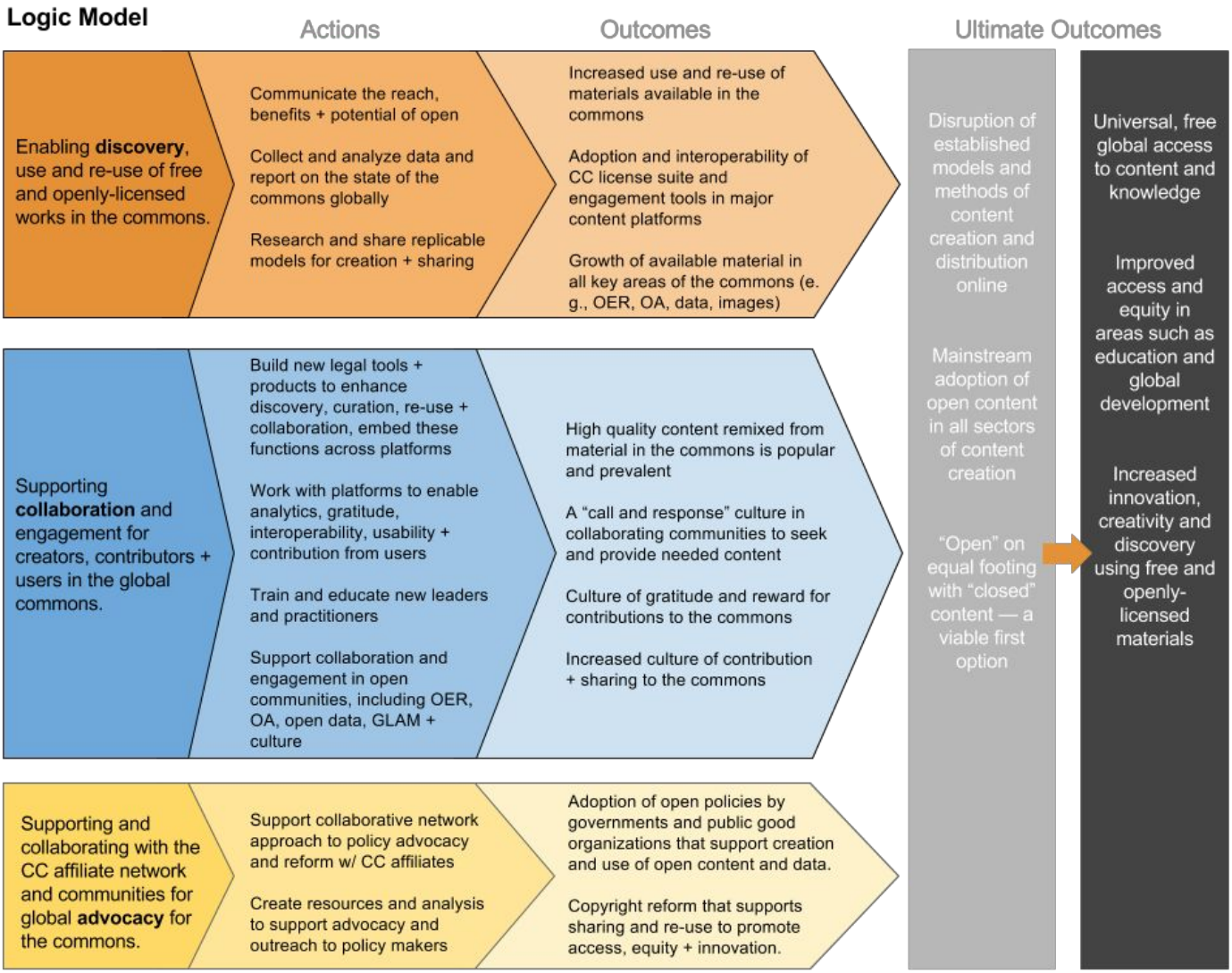
CC's intended outcome statement
"Creative Commons will, within 3-5 years, foster a vibrant, usable, and collaborative global commons, powered by an engaged community of creators, curators, and users of content, knowledge, and data. We will do so by focusing in three intermediate outcomes: discovery, collaboration, and advocacy."

Discovery is about creating a more vibrant and usable commons, both on the platforms where open content is hosted, and also for those works that are individually hosted on creators' websites. Search, curation, meta-tagging, content analytics, one-click attribution are all examples of areas where improved discovery would support creators who wish to use the commons. It is also about telling the story of open collaboration, and demonstrating its value to the world so that others can take it up and join the movement.

Collaboration is about helping creators across sectors, disciplines, and geographies, to work together to share open content and create new works. CC's role is to facilitate greater cooperation and engagement in the commons, realizing the unique benefits of open across many of the communities that rely on open content. In several communities, like OER or open access, CC will play an active role in developing and facilitating solutions for cooperation and engagement — solutions which will often then scale up to other communities. The List, a mobile app that allows users to request images and others to submit them with a CC BY license to a public archive, is a simple tool to facilitate collaboration. Supporting remix, and working with platforms to build more gratitude into the commons will ensure that those who share feel valued for what they have given.

Advocacy is about CC's vital role in advocacy and policymaking. Creative Commons has a powerful and respected voice which can be used to advocate for positive reforms. We are frequently called upon to lend our voice to important open policy debates, and to explain the

impacts for the public good of particular policies, while identifying areas where new or existing policy impacts the ability of users to apply or rely upon CC licenses. However, the fight for copyright reform is a global one, and will only be won if we activate the power of many interconnected global communities. CC does not have the capacity or expertise to manage copyright reform campaigns globally, but the CC affiliate network can, if properly supported and engaged. CC will put collaboration at the centre of our approach, as we have been successful at supporting and collaborating with connected communities that advocate for policies that strengthen the commons, like the Open Policy Network and Communia.


Logic Model
Actions
Outcomes
Ultimate Outcomes
Enabling **discovery**, use and re-use of free and openly-licensed works in the commons.
Communicate the reach, benefits + potential of open
Collect and analyze data and report on the state of the commons globally
Research and share replicable models for creation + sharing
Increased use and re-use of materials available in the commons
Adoption and interoperability of CC license suite and engagement tools in major content platforms
Growth of available material in all key areas of the commons (e.g., OER, OA, data, images)
Supporting **collaboration** and engagement for creators, contributors + users in the global commons.
Build new legal tools + products to enhance discovery, curation, re-use + collaboration, embed these functions across platforms
Work with platforms to enable analytics, gratitude, interoperability, usability + contribution from users
Train and educate new leaders and practitioners
Support collaboration and engagement in open communities, including OER, OA, open data, GLAM + culture
High quality content remixed from material in the commons is popular and prevalent
A "call and response" culture in collaborating communities to seek and provide needed content
Culture of gratitude and reward for contributions to the commons
Increased culture of contribution + sharing to the commons
Supporting and collaborating with the CC affiliate network and communities for global **advocacy** for the commons.
Support collaborative network approach to policy advocacy and reform w/ CC affiliates
Create resources and analysis to support advocacy and outreach to policy makers
Adoption of open policies by governments and public good organizations that support creation and use of open content and data.
Copyright reform that supports sharing and re-use to promote access, equity + innovation.
Disruption of established models and methods of content creation and distribution online
Mainstream adoption of open content in all sectors of content creation
"Open" on equal footing with "closed" content — a viable first option
Universal, free global access to content and knowledge
Improved access and equity in areas such as education and global development
Increased innovation, creativity and discovery using free and openly-licensed materials

What actions will we take to meet this goal?
The initiatives CC will undertake will often cut across the three categories. The table below illustrates how one action may impact multiple intermediate outcomes:

Action	Discovery	Collaboration	Advocacy
Licenses (stewardship, translation, new tools)	•	•	
Data collection/analysis: SotC	•		•
Research and replicable models	•	•	•
Tools and product (search, usability, analytics)	•	•	
Platform engagement and support	•	•	
Affiliate network collaboration	•	•	•
Community engagement (OER, OA, GLAM, etc.)		•	•
Training and education (CC certificate, IOL)		•	•
Communications and storytelling	•		•
Policy analysis and campaigns		•	•

= Metrics =
Creative Commons will establish new baselines and track the following metrics. Some of these metrics can't currently be tracked because of technical limitations with the licenses, or the nature of distributed open content, but our intention is to develop the tools to do so.

Discovery
- Growth (size, adoptions, # and value of open licensing policies)
- Use (downloads, reuse, remix)
- Usability (# of searches (a usable commons is discoverable) on CC search, # of platforms certified as "works w/ CC")

Collaboration
- Number of remixed works
- Requests made and responded to between creators
- Gratitude - messages sent, likes, payments
- Supporters: size of communities, support for actions
- Explore quantitative methods of impact evaluation (e.g., behaviour change of adopters)

Advocacy
- Successful actions/campaigns (local and global)
- Value of open policies ($ w/ default set to open)
- # of open policies (data, education, foundation, department and government-wide)